

**EFFECT OF MILITANCY ON THE EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR STATE****Syed Zahoor Ahmad Geelani\*****ABSTRACT**

*Social and political disturbances have changed in complexity and nature in the recent past and have magnifying human challenges especially for children. Every aspect of human life has suffered and the overall progress of the States has got a pause, the same is true of our state Jammu and Kashmir. Though some fields like economy and tourism have made some progress in the post militancy years but same cannot be said for education in the state. There was a time when people from all over the world flock to Jammu and Kashmir to seek knowledge and enrich themselves from the spiritual guidance of philosophers and world renowned thinkers of Kashmir. Jammu and Kashmir had once been the centre of learning for the Persian and Sanskrit languages during the start of the Indo-Aryan civilization. The state of Jammu and Kashmir had been in socio-cultural unrest due to political disturbance not only during pre-independence but even during the sixty five years of independence. The political unrest in the state has led to armed conflict which had been at the top during the Militancy period in the State. The education sector has experienced the worst damage that is why the literacy rate of the state is still 68.74% which is second lowest in the country and marginally less than the national literacy rate, which stands at 74.04%. The wastage and stagnation at primary, elementary and secondary levels does not show any remarkable change during last two decades despite implementation of SSA and other centrally sponsored educational schemes in the state. In this paper, I will try to find out the immediate effect on various aspects of Education viz, Educational infrastructure, enrollment, achievement, quality, Literacy, human resource and education for all due to the present turmoil in the State. We must always remember that It is education which can help us to change the mindset of the people and can make us to realize the dream of peace and prosperity. We must understand that education is a crucial tool for mitigating the effects of conflict on children and means of rebuilding their lives shattered by the conflict and advocate for compassion; commitment and tenacity need to make education for children affected by armed conflict a priority.*

**Key words:** E-books, Digital Preservation, Dissemination, Distance Learners.

**Introduction**

Civil wars are common in less developed countries and their detrimental effects are widely recognized. Most research on civil wars has been focused on the onset, development and end of armed conflicts. The existing research primarily focuses on African Countries that experienced violent turmoil after their decolonization in the last World War II period (Collier-et al. 2003) however very few researchers have addressed the impact of civil wars on welfare of households and individuals. One possible reason is that large scale high quality house hold level data for developing countries affected by civil wars are generally not available. Second, even when such data are available it is difficult to identify whether the household coping behaviour is induced by war or by economic conditions. Third, detailed measures of conflict and associated with it destructions are often not available. Such information may be difficult to collect in countries that are emerging from an armed conflict. Cotemporary armed conflicts are frequently complex with protracted duration and fought by irregular combatants. Armed conflicts involves the intentional use of illegitimate force with arms or explosives against a person, community or State (Geneva Deceleration 2008) and is generally characterized by at least 1000 conflict related deaths per year. Armed

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\*Associate Professor, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad (College of Teacher Education, Srinagar).

conflict is the fourth leading cause of death for people between the ages of 15 - 44 worldwide (Geneva Deceleration 2008). In the recent conflicts worldwide a remarkable increase has occurred in violence against civilians. In 1980's and 1990's the majority of casualties (80%) were civilians. (Bhuta Yousuf Zia et al 2010) children are especially vulnerable during times of conflict, they are impacted in different ways. Millions of children are caught up in conflicts in which they are not merely bystanders but targets. Some fall victim to a general onslaught against civilians, others die as part of calculated genocide. Still other children suffer the effects of sexual violence or the multiple deprivation of the armed conflict that expose them to hunger or disease. (The attack on Children UNO)

The conflicts and disturbances have changed in complexity and nature in the recent past and have magnified human challenges. Almost every aspect of human life has suffered and the progress and development has got a pause, the same is true of our state Jammu and Kashmir. The residents of Kashmir have often been called the prisoners in heaven (Ganie 2008) they the prisoners of one of the world's longest interstate conflicts, juxtaposed to an exquisite environmental setting. Wars and military conflict impair the functioning of education systems and often lead to extensive damage to the original educational infrastructure. Millions of children are prevented from attending school as a consequence of violent conflicts. The objective of ensuring basic education for the all by the year 2015 is threatened with failure unless it is possible to stamp such destructive societal conflicts. The armed conflicts which started with insurgency in 1989 has costed not only over 70,000 lives but has played a major role in underdevelopment of Kashmir (Schofield, 1997).

Though the economy and tourism has made some progress in the post peak militancy years but same cannot be said about the education in the state. There was a time when people from all over the world flock to Jammu and Kashmir to seek knowledge and enrich themselves from the spiritual guidance of philosophers and world renowned thinkers of Kashmir. Jammu and Kashmir had once been the centre of learning for the Persian and Sanskrit languages during the start of the Indo-Aryan civilization. The state of Jammu and Kashmir had been in socio-cultural unrest due to political disturbance not only during pre-independence but even during the sixty five years of independence. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the micro economic impacts of civil conflicts and in particular to understand the link between armed conflict and various aspects of education. The paper will focus on the Kashmir insurgency, assessment of the long run impact of the insurgency on the educational outcomes of the children.

### **Literature Review**

Many studies have been done on conflict and education both by the Governmental agencies as well as by the individuals, the findings of some important studies are mentioned here:

Mandatory Schooling for girls is affected by 12.3% in the girls who were of school age during conflict in Tajkistan. (Shmyakina Nov. 2006). Wars and military conflicts impair the functioning of education systems and often lead to extensive damage to the original educational infrastructure; Millions of children are prevented from attending schools as a consequence of violent conflict in the world. (Dr Klaus Seitz Dec. 2007).

Children living in municipality in Colombia with high conflict have a gap in enrollment and education accumulation. The enrollment and education accumulation gaps for children of internally displaced persons widen to over a half a year in secondary school. (KateWharten and Ruth UwaifaOyelere August 2011). Girls in urban Kashmir affected by militancy during 1990-96insurgencies have up to 3.5 years less schooling compared to girls less affected regions of Jammu and Kashmir, Boys and girls more

affected by violence are less likely to complete their primary schooling as well as enroll less in primary schooling compared to boys and girls less affected by the insurgency. ( Parlow Anton 31 December 2011).

Schooling outcomes are less for women and men in Germany who lived in high intensity bombing areas during World War II. (AkbulutYuksel 2009). Conflict changes local labour markets from two sides, less male workers are available which affects the economy and this increases demand for female workers due to loss of male bread winners in households women labour supply increases. Research, besides various NGO reports on the effects of Kashmir insurgency on individuals is limited. Doctor without borders (Jong et al 2008). Depression and fear leaving the home is a common finding among the women and men around Srinagar city revealed by the interview taken to people to assess their physical and psychological health after experiencing different forms of violence during the insurgency. (Peterson and Vedal 1994). Kumar (2009) describes the situation of displaced Kashmiris in camps around Jammu. Those Camps lack in educational opportunities for children, health services and employment opportunities for adults. The growing frustration of the unemployed educated youth, the absence of visible economic development due to the conflict prevailing in Jammu and Kashmir State is the overall hindrance to the true educational development (Hibba Arshad, Kashmir corps 2008).

#### **A Preview of Education in J&K**

In the year 1947 there were 2,158 educational institutes in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. After the partition the educational institutes in JK dwindled down to 1,835, a numerical display of the conflict's detrimental effect on the education system (Raza, 1984). However, by the deep interest of people in the region towards education the minimum educational standards were maintained despite the political uncertainty that plagued the region at that time (Ganai, 2008). Just a year after partition, in 1948, a Textbook Advisory Board was established as well as the University of Kashmir (Ganai, 2008). By 1960, State education from pre-primary to higher education was completely free, and there were 5,133 primary schools, 1,354 middle schools, 559 secondary schools, 19 technical institutes, and 9 colleges (Mujoo, 1990). The 1965 Indo-Pak war uprooted many students from their homes, and negatively affected their school routine (Ganai, 2008). Quickly after the end of the 1965 Indo-Pak war, the State moved to revamp their education system. The State government of JK established its own education board, the Board of School Education in the 1970s (J&K Board of School Education, 2008). A subsequent restructure of the education system in JK occurred, which included a revision of curriculum, a new calendar school year, and a survey of the region to determine locations of education institutes (Ganai, 2008). A more youthful, highly educated and politically cognizant generation emerged in Kashmir in the 1980s as a result of an improved education system (Zutshi, 1986). However, economic development and employment opportunities did not expand correspondingly, which lead to a rise in unemployment among the educated (Wirsing, 1998). Frustrated and jobless, many unemployed yet educated youth fell into the 'gun culture' of the late 1980s, which eventually lead to the insurgency and consequential military uprising during the 1990s (Habibullah, 2008) JK officials stated that the several hundred damaged or burnt down school buildings in the 1990s had negative implications to the overall education system, all of which were related to the ongoing conflict in Kashmir (The Tribune, 2008).

In early 2008, the first army school in Kashmir was inaugurated by the Indian Army Chief General Deepak Kapoor and in his inaugural address he stated that the education system in Kashmir was totally demolished by two decades of militancy (India News, 2008). The education system has slowly rebuilt itself after the two decades of continuous violence and uprisings (Gupta, 2007). In the past decade, the ministry of School education in Jammu and Kashmir has opened over 3,500 primary schools and renovated

over 3,300 middle and high schools with substantial funding from India. The centrally educational welfare schemes like SSA and RUMSA were implemented in the state as a result the primary and secondary education has got a boost and the dropout rate from schools in Jammu and Kashmir decreased from 19% in 2003 to 5% in 2008 (Government of Jammu & Kashmir, 2007). Due to sincere efforts of department of education a large number of school buildings had been constructed and many vacant teacher posts in rural area have been filled, but the overall lack of educational development caused by the conflict is one of the most crucial barriers to the peace process in Kashmir. A small war broke out between India and Pakistan in the 1999 and things have remained tense since this war, called “Kargil War”, Educational development and employment opportunities are serious issues which the Government of India as well as the Government of Jammu and Kashmir are to address on priority.

### **The Kashmir Militancy / Insurgency**

Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) is geographically and politically an important state of Indian union. It has a distinct history and political background with its own constitution and is different from other states by virtue of article 370 of Indian constitution. It has got three geographical territories: Jammu division, Kashmir division (the Kashmir valley) and Ladakh division. These three divisions are different from each other in respect of population, geography and culture. Ladakh is barely populated, and while the Jammu (43%) and Kashmir (55%) divisions are densely populated. The state is further divided into 22 districts and smaller administrative units called "tehsils". As per census of 2011 the state has a population of 12,548,926 individuals and State ranks in most economic categories very low (Census of India 2001). Literacy and employment rates are also low, especially for women. The state of J&K has been the reason for three short wars between India and Pakistan (1947, 1965 and 1999) over the territory. Some educated unemployed youth took to arms and staged a war like situation against the state somewhere in 1989. This is known as the Kashmir insurgency.

Militancy started in the late eighties after a disappointing outcome for the "Muslim United Front" (MUF) in the 1987 state assembly election. Due to rigging at some ballots, the JKLF committed more violent incidences following the election (Wolpert 2010). The official start of the insurgency is after the December 1989 kidnapping of Rubaiya Sayeed the daughter of the newly appointed Indian home minister for Kashmir affairs. After her release, the Indian central government sent in security forces to J&K to break down any form of rebellion. Security forces came into Srinagar City and executed brutal crackdowns where mostly civilians suffered (Schofield 2001) Human right violations committed by both sides, but especially violations committed by Indian forces against civilians were normality. Asia Watch (1993) describes it as the "human rights crisis" besides the actual insurgency. The insurgency could be split up into three phases (Meyerle 2008, SATP 2011). The first phase was from 1990 to 1996 were militancy focused on urban areas. The most civilian damage occurred during this phase only. A large number of people migrated from Kashmir and the state got damaged on many fronts including economy. The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase which extended from 1997 to 2001/02 militancy moved to rural areas and districts of Jammu, and considerable human loss was witnessed during this period. The third phase is from 2002 to today. This phase is a low intensity insurgency without any major incidences except the summer unrest of 2008 and 2010.

### **Conflict and Education: The Linkage**

“In every failed state there is a failed education system” (Emily Vargas- Baron based on Nicoai/Triplehorn 2003) Wars and military conflicts inevitably impair the functioning of education system and they are often associated with considerable destruction of the original infrastructure. Millions of

children are prevented from attending school as a consequence of violent conflicts. UNESCO therefore regards conflicts and their consequences as the largest obstacle to realizing the education for all objectives. For many of the effected countries (Cf .Bensalah, 2001, 40; UNESCO 2002). As part of the education for assessment 2000 UNESCO prepared a special inventory for the world education forum Oakar in April 2000 including concrete recommendations for action on education, "Education in situations of emergency and crises", (Bensalah 2001-40) The extent to which violent conflicts may be held responsible in concrete terms for the fact that worldwide 104 million children are excluded from attending schools. According to UNESCO figures 104 million children of primary school age could not attend school in the year 2000 (UNESCO 2003a) UNICEF puts the number of children who do not attend the school at 121 million a much higher figure (UNICEF 2004) due the different conflicts worldwide.

### **The Effect of Disturbance Various Aspects of Education in J & K**

The disturbance of any type jeopardize the whole set up of the state but some fields are destroyed more than the others and the governmental agencies are working with one goal in the mind that is to curb the violence any way, this leads to negligence and poor services on all fronts and the most affected are the essential services of health care, Public distribution system and the education. The militancy in Jammu and Kashmir have destroyed the basic educational setup of the state and has done considerable harm to the various aspects of it like Infrastructure, enrollment, achievement, quality, Literacy, human resource and education for all.

#### **1. Educational Infrastructure**

"It is easier to rebuild roads and bridges than it is to reconstruct institutions and strengthen the social fabric of a society" (Raphael 1998, 8). The insurgency in J&K has caused a great damage to the infrastructure. The basic infrastructure in terms of regular power supply, roads, communication systems, and drinking water remains poor in the state. The findings of the pre-budget Economic Survey 2007-08 in the state presented a very grim picture on all major fronts (Pargal, 2008). The scant road density and the absence of rail and air links make smooth transport and communication difficult in the mountainous region. As per the survey findings, the road length per 100 square km area in J&K is 35.71 km as against 104.64 km in the country. The road density in this state is amongst the lowest in India with huge inter-district variations. J&K has a road density of 13 per cent with highest density of 81.8 per cent in Budgam district and lowest at 2.6 per cent in Leh district. The state has 2060 habitations which have no road connectivity at all. The communication facilities too are inadequate. There is one post office for a 60 sq km area, opposed to the national average of 20 sq km. Number of telephones per 100 people in the state is 7.76, which is well short of the all India level of 13.57. Unlike the other states of India, the mobile phones with pre-paid services do not have roaming facility outside the state, there is no SMS service available to pre paid mobile phones. The state is also under acute electricity crisis and many times there are 11 to 14-hour power cuts. Worse, as many as 25 per cent households in rural areas and 2 per cent in urban areas are without electricity. As many as 58 per cent rural population and 13 per cent urban population have no toilet facility. Safe drinking water is not available to 45 per cent people in rural areas and 4 per cent people in urban areas. There is just one medical centre for 3127 persons. The state has also felt the direct impact of conflict in terms of huge damage caused by violent incidents, taking its toll on both public as well as private properties. From 1989 to 2002, over 1,151 government buildings, 643 educational buildings, 11 hospitals, 337 bridges, 10729 private houses and 1,953 shops have been gutted in some 5,268 attacks on infrastructure. (Strategic Foresight Group, 2005, p. 70)

## 2. *Enrollments*

Generally it has been assumed that school enrolment rates decrease and progress towards a universalisation in basic education slows down considerably under conditions in which protracted conflicts are raging: "In war-affected areas, many children who should be in school are hard to find, hard to get into school, and hard to make sure they remain there until completing their primary education" comments Sommers (2002, 6). The armed conflict and any sort of disturbance usually reduces the demand for education primarily due to destruction of educational infrastructure and secondarily due to safety reasons as the parents decide to keep their children at home for safety as the dangers of travelling to school and the risk of attacks on schools; the economic situation of the family does not permit a child to attend school. A study carried by Anton Parlow in 2011 reveal that there is a negative effect on enrollment in primary education during militancy; Muslim boys enroll less in primary education compared to Hindus. Attitude has a negative impact on primary school enrollment. It is not surprising that when armed conflict breaks out the demand for secondary education goes down and for secondary education there is a negative impact on enrollment. Children are more vulnerable in armed groups as a result of conflict- driven social upheaval and magnified poverty as a result there they have less chances of enrolling themselves in the schools. During the insurgency period, the dropout rate increased tremendously due to the lack of safe and proper school buildings (The Tribune, 2008).

## 3. *Educational Achievement*

Insofar as it is at all possible to maintain a semblance of regular school operations in times of war and crisis, it has to be assumed that the quality of teaching, and also the performance of students, suffers considerably, as does the standard of the school-leavers' qualifications, not least of all as a result of a higher number of drop-outs. During the insurgency in Kashmir there were less number of working days per year due to frequent Hartals (Bandhs) which influenced the achievement levels of the children. The secondary and higher education was more affected in this respect as compared to the primary education. The number of years required to complete a degree also increases as it took me nearly five years (1092-95) to complete three years degree course and three years (1996-1098) to complete the one year B Ed course as the examinations and results were delayed due to frequent Hartals. According to statistics of the state's Home Department there were a total of 2,096 processions and demonstrations sponsored by separatists in the Kashmir Valley in the past two decades and 1,671 such hartals recorded since January 1990. The highest number of 416 demonstrations and processions were recorded in Jammu and Kashmir in 1992 and the highest numbers of 207 hartals were recorded in 1991, the report said. The summer unrest of 2008 and 2010 has added to miseries of the people and the educational achievement which had started to come on the track has again got a fresh setback.

## 4. *Educational Quality*

Although the extent to which conflicts and crises affect the realization of the goal of quality education may only be roughly estimated, it is obvious that all strategic endeavours towards Education for All inevitably integrate the issue of pedagogical intervention in conflict- and crisis-ridden regions and have to be taken more seriously as a task than has been the case to date: "It is essential that education in situations of emergency and crisis become part and parcel of all national and regional EFA Plans" (Bensalah 2002, 38). The political disturbance and any sort of conflict situation leads to poor utilization of funds and non implementation of welfare schemes which is true of our state as well. According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2011, J and K's rural schools are far behind in meeting the

RTE indicators. The data reveals that 47.2 percent schools in rural J and K do not have drinking water facilities while 33.4 percent schools are without a toilet facility. The data reveals that 61 percent schools have no separate provision for girl toilets. The ASER says that close to 50 percent schools have no library and about 48 percent schools are without a playground. Only 28 percent schools are with a boundary wall. As per the RTE there has to be a library in each school providing newspapers, magazines and books on all subjects including story books, while safe and drinking water facilities are a pre-requisite. The funds which have already been credited to the state government usually remain un-utilized at the end of the year, as per a report published in a daily news paper Greater Kashmir about 379 Crore rupees already allocated to the Education at the end of 2011 had remained unutilized in the state, which directly impairs the quality of education in our state.. The quality of education has also been seriously affected by other aspects of the conflict, such as indefinite strikes, intermittent closures and other disturbances, including several educational institutions being set on fire.

#### **5. Literacy Rate**

The 2001 literacy rate for the State was 55%, with rural literacy of 48% and urban 72% (Jammu & Kashmir Development Report, 2003). This sharp contrast in comparing rural versus urban literacy rates illustrates the severe lack of development in rural Kashmir, especially the lack of education in villages closer to the Line of Control (J&K Board of School Education). The historical implications of not prioritizing the education of women and Muslims can be seen through these current statistics. In 2001, male literacy was estimated at 66% and female at 42% (Jammu & Kashmir Development Report, 2003). Also according to the 2003 Report, among the rural areas Hindu-majority Jammu tops the rural literacy rate charts with 72%, and Muslim-majority Kashmir is at the bottom. According to the Report, "this is due to the impact of the militancy; all of the districts affected by militancy have a low literacy rate," (Jammu & Kashmir Development Report, 2003). According to conservative estimates, the militants have razed about 650 schools to the ground and security personnel have occupied several more in rural areas (Mahapatra, 2007). One of the consequences of such activities is a low literacy rate in the state, which stands at 64.97 per cent as compared to the all India literacy rate of 74.04 per cent.

#### **6. Human Resource**

Human resources too have suffered enormously in J&K due to large-scale displacement of Kashmir Pandits, Sikhs and Muslims from the Kashmir valley, as also of those from the upper areas of the Jammu region. During the first phase of insurgency violence in the valley was at its peak and in the urban areas of Kashmir especially in the Srinagar city and upto 100,000 Hindus left the Valley in the first two years of militancy (Asian Watch). Most of these people, living on relief provided by the government, in the campus around Jammu and New Delhi are too far from engagement in any productive activity.. The fear of violence has forced people to think only about survival and not progress. The progressive bent of mind that plays a crucial role in the progress of a society has diminished in the state. The lack of opportunities and overall dismal scenario has also led to significant migration from the valley. Many educated youth from Kashmir have started migrating to other parts of India in search of greener pastures, thereby further depriving the state of the human resource. The migration of Kashmiri Pandiths from Kashmir has caused irreversible and unlimited damage to the education Sector as most of the trained and efficient teachers were from the same community.

### 7. *Education for All*

The dream of education for all could not be realized due the prolonged disturbance in the valley. According to the data of School education department, about 43,153 children who include 19,426 boys and 23,727 girls are out of school (drop outs plus who never enrolled) in J K 2012. About 22,041 children have dropped out from schools. Among them, 9,296 are boys and remaining 12,745 girls. What is more worrying for State, which has most illiterate population among northern states, about 10,982 girls within the age group of 6-14 years have never gone to school. (Greater Kashmir 25/08/12.p01)

### Conclusion

The armed conflicts and political disturbances are of different nature and have different consequences in different situations. The Kashmir insurgency is of unique nature in the world as the people of this beautiful landscape are the victims of an ironic backdrop on one of the longest running, unresolved, interstate armed conflicts in the world. Usually the conflicts and armed disturbances do not remain for longer durations and die up with time. The conflict in Peru ended up with the killing of the leader of the movement. The Srilankan armed conflict also ended with the human loss of the LTTE but the Kashmir insurgency though now with very low intensity is going on and does not seem to end up soon. This disturbance has got long lasting consequences in every field of life and the education sector is the worst hit aspects of human life. The ongoing conflict is the overall hindrance to true educational development that promotes equality and opportunities for all of the residents of Jammu and Kashmir in India. In the words of India's Ex. President, PratibhaPatil, "Education is key to Kashmir's peace and prosperity".(AOL India News, 2008). We must understand that education is a crucial tool for mitigating the effects of conflict on children and means of rebuilding their lives shattered by the conflict and advocate for compassion; commitment and tenacity need to make education for children affected by armed conflict a priority.

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